/109 cont./

124 One day, at the sight of a freshly cleared field on the
423 highest mountain slopes, I asked a Paez working there to whom this land belonged and whether the person concerned had always owned it. He answered that he himself was the owner and that previously the parcel had been ownerless. He said that he had cleared it for himself and only recently built his house here in order to live here. In answer to my question as to whether there was any more ownerless land, he explained to me that the highest and inaccessible mountain peaks which are still covered with big trees and have never been cleared do not belong to anyone and that any Paez could clear a piece on them, which would then become his property. Later I called Victoriano to task, saying that actually there still was ownerless land. "Yes," he then answered me, "of course there is still ownerless land, but it is so poor that it has no value."

157 Far from their village, on the way to market, and
[123] generally in /110/ places away from home, the Paez, if they
[522] are alone or in the minority, are timid and reserved. If they are together in large numbers, however, or, even better, in their own house, they are usually quite bold and impudent and
157 loudly made their jokes at our expense. Indeed, jocularity is a
521 prominent characteristic of the Paez. No talk, no conversation,
522 be it ever so unimportant, is begun without joking -- often of
[834] an erotic nature. The importance of conducting such a light, idle conversation is shown by the fact that serious-minded girls are scarcely ever married.

123 They made fun of my wife in particular, for they found
522 it altogether ugly that she wore long pants. Numerous jokes
157 were made about this, which we, of course, did not understand, and for this reason we, in turn, had to take the initiative by making a joke which was then acknowledged gratefully and usually
609 with quick-wittedness. On the whole, respect toward strangers
522 inside their dwelling is unknown to them. In larger groups they
159 make their asides even in a strange environment, accompanied by much laughter. Since one does not understand them, one
[197] easily gets the impression that they are silly. In their own houses they also mimic the visiting mission priest by repeating

/212 cont./

796 one a liter of aguardiente. The fiestero sits at the center of
273 the table, his wife sits on his right and the síndico on his left.
The albacero approaches, takes the liter in his hands, measures
out a cup, and offers it to the fiestero. The latter accepts
it, drinks, and returns it. From the hands of the albacero he
receives the cup and the liter. The proceeds in the same
fashion with the calabash inside of which is the shachi léchukue.
In the same manner he offers the other bottles and gourds to
[431] the wife of the fiestero and to the síndico. The distribution
begins, for which the fiestero, fiestera, and the síndico call
on three men to take charge of distributing the generous gift.
The aguardiente is distributed by its owners themselves, who
in each cup put small pieces of cake. The clamor increases
in direct proportion to the consumption. Everyone drinks
796 alike: men, women, and children. This is the time for off-
522 color, rich, and abundant joking. The hour when fantasy
273 shines and takes wings. There is practically only one theme,
●831 sex in all its forms and manifestations: desires, /213/ feats,
wooing, pregnancy, childbirth, genitalia, and even sham
coitus in public. Any allusion to sex causes hilarity; many
aspects of life, attitudes, and work are associated with sex.

796 At midnight the bottles and calabashes are empty. The
[273] music has been continuous, the drunkenness has increased ...
But it is not yet over. At the house of the fiestero they are
awaited with another gift.

The fiestero and the albacero dance with each other's wives.
When the dance is over, everyone goes out and vanishes in the
darkness of the night on paths that cannot be seen, only divined.
The sound of the bass drum indicates that the people, the
nasa wala, are on their way to the house of the fiestero.

There they will find the pale yellowish light, the table
next to a pango and toward the center of the ñuhne wala, with
its two lighted candles, its calabashes of chicha, and its
bottles of aguardiente. This time it is the albacero who will